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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 12 March 2014 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Tensions continue to escalate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem — the Territory that constitutes the State of Palestine — owing to the unrelenting, illegal and repressive practices being carried out by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people.

Since my previous letter, more innocent Palestinian civilians have fallen victim to the depraved, excessive and lethal force used by the Israeli occupying army against the defenseless Palestinian civilian population in grave breach of international humanitarian law and human rights law.

On 10 March, Israeli occupying forces shot and killed a Palestinian man, Ra'ed Alaa'eddin Zuaiter, aged 38, at the Allenby Bridge crossing in the Jordan Valley. Mr. Zuaiter, who was a judge in the magistrate courts of Jordan and was travelling to his hometown of Nablus in the West Bank, was wantonly shot several times at close range with live ammunition.

Also on 10 March, Israeli occupying forces shot and killed 18-year-old Saji Sayel Darwish from the village of Beiteen near Ramallah. The occupying Power claims that such lethal force, riddling his body with bullets, was used against the young man because he was "throwing stones" near the settlement of Beit El.

On 11 March, the occupying forces caused the death of another young Palestinian man, Fedaa' Muhyideen Majadleh, when a military vehicle aggressively chased his car near the city of Tulkarem in the northern West Bank, causing him to veer off the road, killing him and seriously injuring the other civilian in the car, Ibrahim Adnan Shukri. At present, Majadleh's body has not been released and Shukri remains detained by the occupying forces.

On 11 March, the Israeli occupying forces launched airstrikes against an area south-east of Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip, deliberately killing three Palestinian

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men, Ismail Abu Joudeh, aged 23, Shaher Abu Shanab, aged 24, and Abdel Shafi Muammar, aged 33.

Throughout this period, the Israeli occupying forces have also continued to use excessive force against Palestinian civilians partaking in protests against the occupation throughout Palestine, causing injuries to dozens of people. This has included the following: the injury of several women during a peaceful demonstration on 8 March at the Qalandiya checkpoint near Ramallah; the injury of several youth protesting near Bethlehem on 10 March by rubber-coated bullets and tear gas canisters; and, on 11 March, the injury of five Palestinians, including a child, when Israeli occupying forces raided Al-Jalazoun refugee camp, north of Ramallah, and fired at civilians with live and rubber bullets. Moreover, the occupying Power continues its military raids and arrest campaign, with dozens of Palestinian civilians seized and detained in just the past few days.

These deliberate, brutal killings are heightening tensions and contributing directly to the further destabilization of the situation, fomenting deep anger and agitation among the Palestinian people and intensifying widespread scepticism regarding Israel's claimed commitment to peace. The ramifications of the persistence of such reckless, violent policies, which repeatedly exhibit Israel's total disregard for Palestinian lives, are potentially grave, both in terms of the situation on the ground and the fragile political negotiation process currently under way.

Moreover, it must be stressed that the wilful killing and injury of civilians constitutes a war crime under international humanitarian law, in accordance with article 147 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Achieving justice for the Palestinian victims of such Israeli brutality requires serious measures to ensure that Israel, the occupying Power, is held accountable for all such crimes and is compelled to cease all of its violations against the Palestinian civilian population under its occupation.

In this regard, we reiterate our call to the international community, including the Security Council and the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, to convey a firm message to Israel to halt forthwith the perpetration of these crimes and human rights violations against the Palestinian people and to demand that the occupying Power comply with its legal obligations and act with respect for the sanctity of human life. It is incumbent upon the international community to uphold this responsibility in line with the Charter of the United Nations, the relevant United Nations resolutions, the human rights covenants and the stipulation in common article 1 of the Geneva conventions to respect and ensure respect for the conventions in all circumstances. Palestine cannot continue to be the exception to all such international rules, principles and standards.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 488 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. The letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 5 March 2014 (A/ES-10/619-S/2014/154), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations